

FORM B - BUILDING

Assessor's number
63/71F

USGS Quad
Boston N.

Area(s)

Form Number
1018

Massachusetts Historical Commission



Town Lexington

Place (neighborhood or village)

Address 7 Adams Street

Historic Name Melissa Downer House

Uses: Present Residential

Original Residential

Date of Construction 1898

Source Lexington Val. Lists, Minute-man, 5/13/1898

Style/Form Colonial Revival

Architect/Builder Mr. McKay, builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation rubble

Wall/Trim wood clapboards

Roof asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

carriage house/garage (1904)

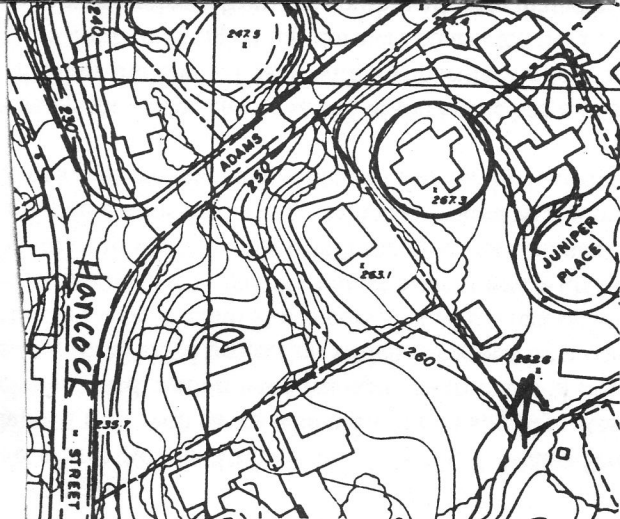
Major Alterations (with dates)

Condition good

Moved ☒ no ☐ yes Date

Acreage 35,368 SF

Setting hilltop above Adams Street, near Hancock



Recorded by Lisa Mausolf

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date (month/year) June 2000

BUILDING FORM (7 Adams Street)

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of the building in terms of other buildings within the community.

Set above Adams Street atop a low hill, 7 Adams Street is a large 2 1/2-story Colonial-Revival dwelling which is capped by a hipped roof with eaves which are flared slightly. Resting on a stone foundation with a raised bead mortar, the building is clapboarded, with a wide wooden watertable and overhanging eaves. Centered on the long, principal north facade is a two-story, three sided projection which is capped by a conical roof. In front of the projection is a porte cochere which is supported by Roman Doric columns which rest on an ashlar stone wall that does not match the foundation of the house. The porte cochere is topped by balled newel posts with a stick balustrade and a two-part, wide frieze. One pilaster is visible adjacent to the front door with the other located next to the three-sided projection. Sheltered by the porte cochere the glass-and-panel door displays a molded surround with a pulvinated frieze and full entablature. Most of the windows contain 1/1 sash set in molded surrounds and flanked by louvered blinds. Two shingled hip dormers rise from the front roof slope.

Facing the street, the west end of the house has a two-story, three-sided projection to the north. The adjacent window openings include 1/1 sash with a tripartite window opening on the first floor and a paired opening above. On the roof above there are two shingled hip dormers connected by a shingled wall decorated by a diamond pattern. A single-story, flat-roofed sunporch projects from the south wall, articulated by paired corner pilasters with a filled balustrade.

At the rear of the house is a hip-roofed, clapboarded garage/carriage house (constructed in 1904) with three overhead garage doors on the north side. The building is lit by 6/6 windows and a brick chimney rises from the roof.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Describe the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

This house was constructed in 1898 for Melissa E. Downer, widow of Francis Downer. According to an article appearing in the *Lexington Minute-man* on May 13, 1898, the house was then nearing completion and was constructed by a builder named McKay. The article describes the exterior of the house as "plain and substantial," noting that the decorative effect is confined to the interior. The site is described as having a magnificent view westward over the Whiting place (a reference to the house preceding the present 8 Adams Street, MHC#697). The article also offers a detailed description of the interior arrangement (*Minute-man*, May 13, 1898).

Mrs. Downer continued to live in the house until about 1922. It was later owned by Edward and Barbara Childs from the mid 1920s until about 1950. Edward Childs was a meat wholesaler. The house has had five owners since 1960.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Lexington Assessors Records.
Lexington Directories, various dates.
Lexington Minute-man, May 13, 1898.
Lexington Valuation Lists, various dates.

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attached a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*